

Documents

ANGLO-AMERICAN RIVALRY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

By H. Salimjanov

British and American official circles are eager to create the impression that complete harmony on questions of colonial policy prevails between the United States and Great Britain, and that both are pursuing the supremely noble and lofty aim of assisting backward countries.

But the fact of the matter is that there are deep contradictions between the colonial interests of Great Britain and the U.S.A., and these contradictions, far from being smoothed out, are becoming more and more acute. There can be no doubt that the British and American imperialists are competing with one another in an effort to establish, extend and consolidate their economic and political domination over the backward countries, to subjugate them and convert them into their own, exclusive colonial domain.

True, on certain questions pertaining to the Middle East, Britain and America are at present seeking to act in concert. But these questions are confined to the establishment of strategic bases directed against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, the suppression of the national-liberation movement of the subjugated nations that are rising against British and American colonial oppression. By intimidating the ruling classes of the backward and dependent countries with the fictitious "Communist danger" and by inciting them to reprisals against the democratic and anti-imperialist elements, the British and American authorities are trying to make it easier to carry out their own plans of expansion.

As a result of World War II, the British Empire was compelled to give up a

number of its positions to a stronger rival, American imperialism. But the British imperialists are bending every effort to prevent American influence from growing too strong.

This can be seen, for instance, in Ethiopia where after the war British capitalists were compelled to agree to an American oil company receiving a concession on British-occupied territory in the Ogaden. But no sooner did an American expedition set out to prospect for oil, than mysterious, "unknown" bands attacked the American geologists and engineers. Things reached a stage when the expedition temporarily ceased operations and demanded that the British military administration in the Ogaden take measures to secure the safety of the American personnel. Local circles are convinced that the acts of sabotage in the Ogaden were engineered by British agents in order to force the American company to abandon so "dangerous" a concession.

The clash of British and American interests, and the desire of British imperialism to retain its positions, find graphic illustration in Iran. Standard Oil of New Jersey and Socony Vacuum Oil concluded an agreement in 1946 with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company by which they were allocated 20 per cent of all oil extracted in Southern Iran. In the spring of 1948, the American companies tried to raise their share to 45-50 per cent, which would have meant in fact the establishment of American control over the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, and, consequently, a very considerable weakening of Britain's positions in Iran. The British government took steps to "buy off" these American demands by announcing that it was prepared to abandon its claim to the Bahrein Islands in favor of the U.S. and turn over part of its rights to work the Bahrein oil fields to American monopoly firms.

In making this counter-proposal Britain hoped that she could maintain intact the positions she had seized in Iran, where the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company is virtually a state within a state. But American monopolies continue to work for key positions in every branch of Iran's economic life, and in doing so, inflict many telling blows on British firms. Anglo-American rivalry in Iran is fully reflected in the corrupt government circles of that country. Pro-American and pro-British groups in the government and Mejlis are constantly fighting among themselves. Anglo-American contradictions are mirrored in the press of the ruling camp.

The struggle between British and American monopolies for oil and other strategic

materials is growing more acute also in Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and other countries. All means are fair means in this battle of imperialist plunderers. Cowardly murders, explosions, *coups d'etat*, cabinet changes—behind all these day-to-day political events in the Middle East one can discern the rivalry of the imperialist powers.

As a reward for the economic and strategic advantages enjoyed by American monopolies in Egypt, the United States promised to support the Cairo government against British interests.

When last year Yahya, the Imam of Yemen, seemed inclined to grant the American demands, British agents simply assassinated Yahya and tried to set up a government that would suit their purposes. The plan miscarried; their opponents were stronger, and the British agents were overthrown by the supporters of Yahya's policy. Ahmed, Yahya's oldest son, was proclaimed ruler.

Syria is becoming an apple of discord between American and British imperialists. There was a *coup d'etat* in that country in March; it is significant that it took place on the eve of the signing of the Franco-Syrian financial agreement, and just before the conclusion of an agreement with the American Trans-Arabian Pipeline Company for the construction of a pipeline from Saudi Arabia to the Mediterranean via Syria. Britain's puppets, King Abdullah of Transjordan and Prime Minister Nuri Said of Iraq, displayed great activity in connection with the events in Syria.

There were loud and insistent demands for the immediate establishment of a "greater Syria" patterned after the old British plan. This plan provided that Abdullah would unite under his rule Transjordan, Iraq, a country ruled by representatives of the Hashimite dynasty, Syria, Lebanon and the Arab portion of Palestine. However, in view of the opposition displayed by the Arab peoples to the "greater Syria" plan, British leaders have advanced a new version—the so-called "blessed crescent" plan, which provides for a union that would include Iraq, Transjordan, Syria and the Arab part of Palestine.

The activities displayed by British agents evoked an immediate rebuff from the American side. As a counter to the British plan of a Hashimite monarchy there appeared an American plan for setting up an anti-Hashimite bloc under the aegis of the kings of Egypt and Saudi Arabia. The Israel *Hämishmar* [organ of the United Workers Party—Eds.] wrote on this score:

"The U.S. State Department wants to make this bloc the chief weapon of American policy in the Middle East. In this connection, the American Ambassador in Saudi Arabia, Childs, suggested that King



Ibn Saud conclude a secret military and political alliance with Egypt and Syria... In compensation, Ibn Saud was promised U.S. support for his claim to the area between Ma'an and Aqaba which at present forms part of Transjordan."

The Italian *Repubblica* regards these plans as a "warning to Transjordan and Iraq, which are working to build up a Hashimite State." The American plans exerted an instantaneous effect on Husni el Zayim. His attitude toward the plans for creating a greater Syria and a Hashimite monarchy changed to such a marked degree that King Abdullah thought it prudent to concentrate his troops on the Syrian frontier. In retaliation, Syrian troops were dispatched to the Transjordan frontier.

Anglo-American rivalry is also marked on the Palestine issue. Following the bankruptcy of British policy in Palestine, and in connection with the UN decision, the London government was compelled to renounce its mandate. Subsequent events, however, proved that this was simply a maneuver to retain control of the positions which Britain is losing in Palestine and to prevent their seizure by the American monopolies. The war in Palestine reflected the struggle between British and American imperialists for key positions in that country, for control over her economy, and the port of Haifa, the

terminal of the pipe line stretching from the Iraq oil fields.

Events in Palestine have shown that Britain has no intention of allowing the existence on Palestinian territory of independent Arab and Jewish states, but that she is merely out to consolidate her domination over that country. The American imperialists, who have agents in Tel-Aviv Zionist circles, are trying to gain control over the economic and political life of Israel with the help of a dollar loan and by other means. Britain, for her part, is taking advantage of her long-established contacts among the Jewish bourgeoisie. Through her placeman, King Abdullah of Transjordan, she is trying to seize areas designated for the independent Arab State in Palestine, which was to be set up under the United Nations decision.

A compact between the British and American imperialists is but a compact between two competing cliques of plunderers for the division of the booty. Unity of action in carrying out anti-democratic and reactionary measures does not signify any reconciliation of contradictions between the U.S.A. and Britain in the Middle East. In their efforts to secure the most advantageous positions, both powers are undoubtedly fighting hard to seize and revivide the colonial and dependent territories which are also sources of strategic raw materials, markets and military bases. The policy of both the American and

British imperialists is obviously directed against the vital interests of the peoples of the Middle East, it is a policy of plundering and subjugating them. The popular masses of the Middle East are now learning from bitter experience that their salvation lies in uniting all their forces to fight for national liberation, democracy and independence.

(From New Times, May 25, 1949.)

FORUM und TRIBUENE

now a magazine

THE ONLY PROGRESSIVE
JEWISH PUBLICATION
IN GERMAN

For free sample copy,
write:

Forum and Tribune

200 WEST 72nd ST., ROOM 4B
TR. 4-6787 New York 23, N. Y.

"PALACE SCANDAL"

Now Playing: ARTKINO's new magicolor film
in German — English Titles

Coming: "THE MAGIC HORSE"

A new Russian animated color film
STANLEY 7th Ave., bet. 41 & 42
THEATER Streets, New York City

SPECIAL FOURTH OF JULY WEEKEND



Full Social Staff

SAM LIPTZIN, cultural director

FRED HELLERMAN and his guitar

SID HARVEY, athletics

PIUTE PETE, folk dancing

JOE KUTCHER and his orchestra

SONIA HANDELMAN, counsellor

VALIA HIRSCH, program director

FANNY and JOHN HILLBERG,
Managers



THREE DAYS OF GALA ENTERTAINMENT

to celebrate Independence Day in an atmosphere reflecting the best tradition of a progressive Jewish American culture. Movies, campfires, books, records, nature hikes, besides all the usual facilities of the best type of luxurious summer resort.

ALLABEN HAS EVERYTHING

including children's day camp, and at *budget prices*. The cultural program is conducted by the School of Jewish Studies.

New York Office: Room 301, 575 Sixth Avenue

MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW